

Promising Practices among Community Indicator Efforts

ASPA 2008 Annual Conference

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Agenda

- Define community indicators
- Discuss the two types of indicator systems
- Provide examples of indicator selection criteria
- Identify key attributes of community indicator efforts
- Describe some promising practices
- Discuss an effort to create a key national indicator system
- Identify resources related to this presentation

What are community indicators?

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO):

- Indicator: a quantitative measure that describes an economic, environmental, social or cultural condition over time.
- Indicator system: an organized effort to assemble and disseminate a group of indicators that together tell a story about the position and progress of a jurisdiction or jurisdictions.

Source: Informing Our Nation: Improving How to Understand and Assess the USA's Position and Progress, GAO-05-1 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 10, 2004).

Two Types of Indicator Systems

- Topical indicator systems
- Comprehensive indicator systems

Example of Indicator Selection Criteria

- Central Oklahoma Vital Signs
 - Significance to the Local Community
 - Ability to Reflect a Specific Dimension and to Contribute to the Overall Picture of the Well-being of Citizens
 - Ability to Support Policy Decisions
 - Ability to be Obtained Annually
 - Ability to be Measured Consistently Over Time

Example of Indicator Selection Criteria

- Jacksonville Quality of Life Indicators

- Purpose
- Importance
- Validity and accuracy
- Relevance
- Responsiveness
- Anticipation
- Understandability
- Availability and timeliness
- Stability and reliability
- Outcome orientation
- Asset orientation
- Scale
- Clarity
- Representativeness

Example of Indicator Selection Criteria

- Boone County (MO) Indicators
 - Important/meaningful
 - Valid/reliable
 - Geographic comparisons
 - Timely
 - Facilitates the establishment and evaluation of policy decisions
 - Understandable

Key Attributes of Community Indicator Efforts

- Provide easy to understand information on community conditions
- Engage stakeholders
- Prompt discussion and debate
- Facilitate the building of coalitions
- Act as a catalyst for action
- Result in change

Promising Practices

- Truckee Meadows Tomorrow
 - Indicator reports provide clear information on progress made on indicators
 - Adopt an indicator program
 - Creates community compacts
 - Celebrates successes

Promising Practices

- Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project
 - Brings together organizations and groups to serve as champions of community goals
 - Facilitates the creation of coalitions to work on improving community conditions
 - Sends every household a 16-page summary report
 - Identifies community heroes

Promising Practices

- Osceola County (FL) Community Report Card
 - Community visioning process
 - Broad engagement of stakeholders to reassess existing indicators and amend them to focus on those considered to be most valuable
 - Indicators are used to build coalitions to create change
 - Annual Elected Officials Summit
 - Full-color, 12-page abstract of the Community Report Card included as an insert in local newspaper

Promising Practices

- Jacksonville Quality of Life
 - Targets for indicators are set and periodically revised
 - Indicator report provides a snapshot of indicator trends showing whether the trend is better, worse, or the same as previously reported
 - An annual citizen participation process is used to identify significant community problems and selects some for further study.
 - Following the study process and issuance of a report, a citizens' implementation task force seeks to place the report's recommendations on the community agenda.

Effort to Create a Key National Indicator System

- Effort is an outcome of a Forum hosted by GAO, in cooperation with the National Academies, in February 2003
- National Coordinating Committee grew out of the Forum (2003-2006)
- Effort incubated at the National Academies (2005-2006)
- State of the USA, Inc established as a 501(c)(3) in 2007
- Indicator effort focus: To assemble a set of key indicators to assess the nation's position and progress among these indicators. National goals will not be set.

Resources

- Boone County Indicators,
<http://booneindicators.org>
- Central Oklahoma Vital Signs,
www.unitedwayokc.org/research_vs.htm
- Jacksonville Quality of Life,
www.jcci.org/default.aspx
- Osceola Community Report Card,
www.community.org

Resources

- Santa Cruz Community Assessment Project, www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/www/cap_report.htm
- Truckee Meadows Tomorrow, www.quality-of-life.org
- State of the USA, www.stateoftheusa.org
- Community Indicators Consortium, www.communityindicators.net

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